



The Jewish GailyForward

Elul + Tishrei + Cheshvan 5768 ■ September + October 2008

What's Up at Sha'ar Zahav

See Page 4 for the Holiday Schedule

SEPTEMBER 29 EREV ROSH HASHANAH

OCTOBER 8 EREV YOM KIPPUR

OCTOBER 13 SUKKOT BEGINS

OCTOBER 20 SIMCHAT TORAH

OCTOBER 21 SHEMINI ATZERET

Please contact the Sha'ar Zahav office at 415-861-6932 for High Holiday tickets. Office will be closed during the High Holidays.

CSZ-SFOP Meeting - Do YOU favor marriage equality?

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4,

7:00-8:30 PM; THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2,

7:00-8:30 PM Sha'ar Zahav's SFOP is taking a role fighting the passage of Proposition 8—the constitutional amendment on November's ballot which would ban same-sex marriage. COME and bring friends to work against this Prop; we need your ideas and your passion!

Back to Shul Night Congregation Sha'ar Zahav's Open House

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 4:30 PM

Light refreshments served

RSVP requested but not required:

415-861-6932 or

membership@shaarzahav.org

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Kol Tzedek: Together for Marriage Equality

On May 15, when the California Supreme Court issued its historic marriage ruling granting gays and lesbians the right to marry in this state, a virtual "Kol haKavod!" cheer reverberated throughout Jewish LGBT communities around the globe. Our Kabbalat Shabbat service on May 16th became even more celebratory than usual and then Sha'ar Zahav's leadership, clergy and staff quickly turned to how we would participate in both providing for marriages and in preserving our right to marry.

With encouragement from President Ora Prochovnick and then President-elect Alex Ingersoll, Director of Children's and Family Education Rebecca Weiner, Rabbi's Assistant and Membership Liaison Greg Lawrence, Cantor Sharon Bernstein and Rabbinic Intern Reuben Zellman immediately started dreaming and planning to mobilize a visible queer Jewish celebratory presence at City Hall as soon as possible.

Rebecca, Reuben and Greg reached out to the LGBT Alliance at the Jewish Community Federation, Progressive Jewish Alliance, and Jewish Mosaic, and an amazing collaborative partnership, Kol Tzedek (Voice of Justice) was created. Our four organizations planned and executed what proved to be a joyful and inspiring Jewish presence at City Hall on the first evening and day that marriage licenses were issued to same sex couples.

Complete with rainbow chuppah, wedding cake, klezmer music and a snazzy banner (which now hangs outside at Sha'ar Zahav), we were joined as well by Sha'ar Zahav congregants plus friends and colleagues from Congregation Emanuel, Jewish Community Relations Council, NUJLS and others.

Also in the days that followed the Supreme Court decision, with the long-distance help of Rabbi Angel who was already on sabbatical, Cantor Bernstein, Reuben, Greg, Rebecca, Ora, Alex and Regina Wurst, our Administrator, developed policies, procedures and guidelines for civil marriage which our congregation could offer to our members and to the larger community. Five lay leaders joined our clergy in being possible officiants—and by August 1 more than two dozen weddings have been celebrated or are in the advanced planning stages.

Members who married included those who had already celebrated their kiddushim but not a civil marriage; those who had been married in 2004 but had seen their marriages nullified; those who want a civil marriage now and are planning for a separate Jewish ceremony later; and those who just want to get married! (continued on page 8)





"ARENA IS coming to town!"

The traveling Circus Arena has become a summertime favorite my family looks forward to whenever we are in Denmark, where my wife Karen has many relatives. As we were driving across the bridge, Lilah spotted the big bright red and yellow tent Arena was setting up for its tour on the island.

Two nights later, we were part of the excitement of this amazing circus, which once again did not disappoint. Performers this year included a ladder balancing act; the Brazil Brothers in their wheel of death; the Shaolin monks with their Asian battle arts; and Picasso JR who juggles 8 ping-pong balls using just his mouth.

The night after Circus Arena, something strange and revealing happened. I had this dream: It was Erev Rosh Hashanah and I was waiting in the wings of the Herbst Auditorium/sanctuary to make my return debut as your new and improved rabbi fresh from Sabbatical. With the chorus and Cantor giving me my cue, out I came, with cartwheels and flips, landing perfectly on my feet and finishing with a grand Ta-daah!

Suddenly, I realized, "Hey, I can't do any of that. I haven't learned any fabulous new stunts to impress and amaze them." Feeling painfully self-conscious, I froze for a moment. And then I looked out into the congregation. Seeing your faces, I felt a measure of compassion for myself.

After all, I never intended for this sabbatical to be a time of huge production. Rather I was looking for time to step back from the daily pressures of work, to find time to appreciate and do things that my life doesn't ordinarily allow enough time for.... and if that involved some learning, (as I have done with Aviva Zornberg and with Ruth Calderon), some Jewishly-inspired traveling (as with our Eastern European trip with our CSZ community) and some time for contemplation (as in my meditative days at Kripalu in Massachusetts)—great!

But I also needed time for rejuvenation so that I am replenished for the life of service that I engage in daily.

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

290 Dolores Street
San Francisco CA 94103

VOICE 415-861-6932

FAX 415-861-6081

EMAIL office@shaarzahav.org

WEB <http://www.shaarzahav.org>

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism, the World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews, and the San Francisco Organizing Project



Sha'ar Zahav Staff

RABBI Camille Shira Angel
(x301) rabbiangel@aol.com

CANTOR Sharon Bernstein
(x313) cantorbernstein@gmail.com

RABBINIC INTERN Reuben Zellman
(x306) reuben@shaarzahav.org

COUNSELOR Randy Weled
randy@shaarzahav.org

ADMINISTRATOR Regina Wurst
(x308) regina@shaarzahav.org

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY EDUCATION Rebecca Weiner
(x302) Rebecca@shaarzahav.org

RABBI'S ASSISTANT AND MEMBERSHIP LIASON Greg Lawrence
(x303) greg@shaarzahav.org
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Shaun Hannan
(x304) shaun@shaarzahav.org

Officers

PRESIDENT Alex Ingersoll
ingersollax@earthlink.net

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT Karen Schiller

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT Laura Lowe

THIRD VICE PRESIDENT James Carlson

TREASURER Merle Malakoff

RECORDER Avi Goldberg

• Welcoming Community



L'SHANAH TOVAH! By the time you're reading this column, you've probably entered the month of Elul—a time for reflection in our Jewish traditions—leading up to the High Holy Days. Needless to say, the JGF deadlines forced me to begin my reflections a little earlier this year.

By definition, reflections start with oneself. I look forward to our High Holy Day services. They provide an opportunity to spend long hours in the company of friends—both those whom I see regularly and those I see only at Herbst. The services always touch and often inspire me. I love the size and warmth of our community gathering together. And I feel a deep pride in the many talented lay leaders and laymers, in our amazing rabbi, in our stirring choir and rabbinic intern. This year we also will be joined by our fabulous cantor. I can hardly wait.

These feelings are particularly strong for me during the High Holy Days, but I also feel them throughout the year. You will find me at services most Friday evenings and the occasional Saturday morning. Being at Sha'ar Zahav always reinforces a comfort in my community and provides a welcome break at the end of a busy week.

So, while I reflect on the Days of Awe (including my “awe” at the way we fill Herbst Theater) I also wonder about those whom I only see during this holiday period. I wonder, what special needs do the High Holy Days fill for you? Are these needs felt only once a year? Or do they exist throughout the year? Are they needs which Sha'ar Zahav could satisfy, but currently does not?

In asking some of my once-a-year friends, here's some of what I've heard:

You come because of deep childhood connections to the holidays.

You come to reflect and be inspired by the ritual, by our clergy and lay leaders, by the drashes. The opportunity for reflection on life speaks to you.

You come ... just in case. All that talk about the Book of Life, the doors closing. There's an ineffable mystery at work

and you're covering your bases. Just in case.

It has nothing to do with ritual—it's about community. There's comfort and joy in sitting with the same people, in being among friends. In being in community.

You feel validation and inclusion as a Jew. You especially like that Sha'ar Zahav allows you to be both queer and Jewish. Maybe the rest of the year, you don't live a particularly Jewish life, but this once-a-year shot of Judaism is satisfying.

And now, as president of Sha'ar Zahav, I have to ask: How could we satisfy your needs more than once a year?

The High Holy Days were an important point of entry for me into Judaism and community. When I lived in Tel Aviv in the 70s, long before I had converted, I was often drawn into a neighborhood shul during the High Holy Days, nearby in Hadar Yosef. It was a small, orthodox, and mainly Yemenite congregation. My ears were met with complete cacophony—and my eyes weren't helpful in sorting it out. But there seemed to be something important in the fervent prayer—and the equally fervent side conversations. Although I didn't understand what it was, something drew me in. I wanted to be near it, to be part of it—even though each of my visits lasted only 15 or 20 minutes before I quietly fled.

After I moved to San Francisco and joined Sha'ar Zahav, the High Holy Days slowly gained meaning and resonance as a result of my just showing up and my learning more about our traditions. A few years ago, Yom Kippur gained a deeper and very personal spot in my heart when it became my first big date with Martin. He agreed to fly in from Boston and I gave him a tallit for the occasion—a full “adult tallit” to replace his bar-mitzvah model. I wrapped him in it and we held hands during Kol Nidre. (Imagine, a romantic Yom Kippur!)

Now, I get that feeling every week, when Martin and I go together to shul. A good and wise friend, Karen Schiller, often talks about how Sha'ar Zahav provides her a weekly tradition, a way to find room for being Jewish on a regular basis — whatever level of Jewishness she wants or needs.

I thought, after my 25-plus year connection to Sha'ar Zahav, that I knew how the congregation met (continued on page 17)

Va'ad Members

Aaron Danzig
Manny Fishman
Jo Ellen Green Kaiser
Susan Lubeck
Shelli Rawlings-Fein
Amy Scharf
Craig Shear
Michael Tyler
Abi Weissman

Jewish Gaily Forward

EDITOR Jo Ellen Green Kaiser
(jgkaiser@earthlink.net)
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Rebecca Weiner
(*education*); Shaun Hannon (*donations, sponsorships*) and Greg Lawrence
(*naches, lifecycle*)
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE Batya Kalis, Karen Schiller,
Howard Steiermann, Jonathan Williamson,
Nina Wouk.
DESIGN AND LAYOUT Jonathan Wieder
(design@JonathanWieder.com)

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What's Up at Sha'ar Zahav

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East Bay Chavurah

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 6:00 - 9:00 PM; FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 6:00 - 9:00 PM We invite your entire family and your friends (non-members warmly welcomed) to CSZ's East Bay Chavurah. To RSVP please contact Richard Weiner, 510.531.7660, or Sue Bojdak, 510.530.9955.

Holiday Schedule

Please contact the Sha'ar Zahav office at 415-861-6932 for High Holiday tickets. Office will be closed during the High Holidays.

S'lichot

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2008 8:00 PM Prepare for the High Holidays with this service focused on atonement.

Erev Rosh Hashanah

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 7:30 PM Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness Ave @ McAllister. *A ticket is required for this service.*

First Day of Rosh Hashanah - Shacharit & Musaf

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 9:30 AM Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness Ave @ McAllister. Services are free and open to the public.

Tashlich

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2:00 PM Join us at Crissy Field for a picnic lunch (bring your own) and the ritual casting away of our sins into the waters of the Bay.

Second Day of Rosh Hashanah - Shacharit & Musaf

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 9:30 AM Congregation Sha'ar Zahav. Services are free and open to the public.

THE MITZVAH OF MAKING A MATCH

Here we are in the fog of San Francisco summer, but the High Holidays are just around the corner! Last year we raised more money for High Holidays than ever, \$58,000, which is an increase of \$24,000 from the year before! A substantial amount of this increase was due to people like you responding to a simple challenge. People who increased their pledges from the previous year, or who had never before given a High Holiday pledge, were matched by a few generous congregants.

CSZ's Fund Development Committee wants to provide all congregants and friends of CSZ with the opportunity of making a substantial difference once again this year. If you are interested in offering funds of \$500 or more for this High Holiday Matching Challenge, please e-mail Ruth Schoenbach at rschoen@wested.org or call at 415 566-1561. THANKS!

Kol Nidre Yom Kippur

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 7:30 PM Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness Ave @ McAllister. *A ticket is required for this service.*

Yom Kippur

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9 Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness Avenue at McAllister. *A ticket is required for Yizkor/Neilah at 5:45pm.* Morning services, study sessions, and Mincha are free and open to the public. There will be a break-the-fast meal following Neilah services.

Sukkot

SUNDOWN OCTOBER 13– SUNDOWN OCTOBER 21 The CSZ office will be closed on Tuesday, October 14 and Tuesday, October 21 in honor of Sukkot. Call 415-861-6932 or check email newsletter for details.

Simchat Torah Celebration

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2008, 6:30 PM Please join us in song and dance as we celebrate the completion of this cycle of reading the Torah. Call 415-861-6932 or check email newsletter for more details.

Yizkor Shemini Atzeret: Service of Remembering

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2008, 10:00 AM All are welcome to join the community to say Kaddish and honor your loved ones through the mitzvah of remembering.

Preparing for the High Holy Days

"Introduction to the High Holy Days at CSZ"

WHEN: FIRST WEEK IN SEPTEMBER
TEACHER: TBA

This class will answer those frequently unasked questions that many of us have over the various High Holiday practices, like why do some people wear Crocs on Yom Kippur. We will explain the basics and focus on special CSZ practices.

High Holy Day Tunes with Cantor Sharon Bernstein

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 8, 7:00–8:30 P.M. Join Cantor Bernstein to prepare musically for the High Holy Days.

Teshuva with Maimonides

WHEN: TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16TH, 7-9
TEACHER: REUBEN ZELLMAN

Join us to study selected excerpts from the famous twelfth-century "Laws of Teshuvah" from the Mishneh Torah. Maimonides (the Rambam) offers fascinating and thoughtful guidelines for how to assess our own lives at this time of year, how to forgive, and how to ask forgiveness from others.

Kol Nidre

By Cantor Sharon Bernstein

kay, okay. I admit it. I broke some vows this year. Not that I intended to, mind you. I really meant them when I made them, it's just that I didn't quite, you know, *complete* them. Yeah, sure, they were just promises to myself, but a vow is a vow, right? Or is it?

Each year, going into the High Holy Days, we tend to find ourselves with a string of broken vows to ourselves, to loved ones, to God. Ghosts of new years' resolutions past. Exercise plans gone awry, projects not completed, time not spent with friends and family. We focus on these, repeat our *ashamnu* and *al chets*, apologize, vow to do better.

And before we do so, we recite Kol Nidre.

Kol Nidre began as a personal prayer. Probably sometime in the eighth century; we can guess at the date because the Babylonian rabbis started objecting to it in the ninth century. Despite their objections, it was too popular to be suppressed, and became an integral part of Yom Kippur eve in every Jewish community in the world.

The text is problematic. A legal formula for the annulment of vows, it has historically been cited by others as proof that Jews cannot be trusted. Also among Jews there is confusion – what does it mean that our vows are cancelled? What is the point, then, of making them?

First, it must be said that the vows to which the text refers are *personal* vows: vows made to oneself and to God. Kol Nidre cannot revoke vows made to other people.

Which doesn't mean that the personal vows are unimportant. Quite the opposite. According to the Torah, one's word is sacred: "A person who vows a vow to God or swears an oath to bind his or her soul with a bond may not profane his or her word." (Num. 30:3) A vow *must* be kept, to the point that we be extremely sparing in the vows that we make. Which is all well and proper in our daily dealings. But on the eve of



Yom Kippur, faced with ourselves, with all our warts and flaws, with our hopes to change, to improve, to do better, Kol Nidre encourages us to take risks, to make vows that we might not be able to keep. All in the intent of pushing ourselves just a little bit further.

It is worthwhile, as we apologize for the vows we broke, to think of our

successes. The times we *did* step on the treadmill, even if it wasn't as often as we wanted, the distance we went on that special project, the many small steps we took towards improving ourselves, our lives, our relationships, the world around us. All born of those vows.

So let's go ahead and vow. Vow big. Shana Tova.

Tevye in High Heels



AND SO it begins... another year of Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer (BSPM). I am thrilled to be at the helm of this magical institution as we start this year and excited about the changes that await us.

Over the summer, I made a new friend, who asked me the simple question "Why do you do what you do? What do you think is so important about Jewish education; shouldn't it just be humanist education?" I guess their point was that the underlying values that the values we try to teach our children don't need to be attached to a certain doctrine or religion.

I disagree. First of all, one of the most important mitzvot is the teaching of Torah. It is my belief that every child will draw the lessons they need to learn from Torah, and that those lessons will serve that child in a unique way. Especially as a Jewish feminist, knowing that for centuries women were denied Torah learning, I feel strongly that women will and have already changed the text and the commentary of Torah by virtue of having access to it.

I also believe fervently in the notion of Tikkun Olam, repairing the world. I believe that Judaism and Jewish education gives you a template like no other for creating this Tikkun. In my Jewish education, I learned that if you were not in some way fighting to create this Tikkun, through righteous acts, I was not fulfilling my obligation as a Jew and as a human being. I truly hope that every student will feel that sense of responsibility to make a difference in this world, to find their special way of giving back and consider it their obligation to do so.

Finally, at the risk of sounding like Tevye in high heels, I suppose that I am compelled to impart Jewish knowledge because I believe so strongly in the notion of "tradition." I may argue with it, I may deconstruct and reconstruct it, I may question its validity in a post-modern millennium. However, I would not

trade the knowledge of my history. I cherish, the experience of taking part in rituals that Jews have practiced for thousands of years. I also believe that if you are a true student of Jewish history then you learn that accountability is everything and that as humans, as Jews, we will fall down, miss the mark, but we will also struggle to correct. Tsuvah is in many ways a metaphor for the importance of learning one's history.

Turning now to the specifics of BSPM, I have spent time over the summer working to make sure our school will also be accountable to our community, and that our community will have a deeper opportunity to interact with our children.

Each class will now have learning objectives in addition to our fabulous curriculum. These will be defined in the beginning of the year for both parents and student. We will use the format of the objectives to help keep parents updates on the progress of the class and their child with a monthly update from the teacher.

Look for our new and improved "Celebration of Learning" at the end of each unit. This year each child will have a portfolio and parents will be invited to the classroom to participate in a lesson and observe their child's work.

We have our brand new Shabbat Ruach program, third Friday of the month at 6:00. This is a rocking Shabbos explosion for families and friends with Deborah Newbrun and Isaac Zones. It should not be missed!!

And I promise you there will more improvement and adventure. In the meantime, have a wonderful sweet New Year and I will see you at opening circle.

B'Shalom,
Rebecca

CALENDAR

FAMILY

Friday Night Live – For Families with Children 0-6

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 6:00 - 7:00 PM; FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 6:00 - 7:00 PM

Isaac Zones and Daniel Meyer-O'Keeffe return with smiles and song to bring you Friday Night Live! Enjoy a fun, festive Shabbat service then stay for dinner in the oneg room. We will provide pizza, but we encourage you to bring a vegetarian dish to share with the community as well. If you wish to sponsor this or a future FNL dinner, please contact the synagogue office, 415-861-6932.

Shabbat Ruach—For Families with Children 5-12

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17; PIZZA DINNER 6:00 PM, SERVICE 6:30 PM-7:15 PM

This new monthly Kabbalat Shabbat Program is a rocking ruach-filled Shabbat service led by former Camp Tawonga Director, Deborah Newbrun and Isaac Zones of Friday Night Live fame. Family and class participation will be a staple of this service, held every third Friday. Let the ruach begin!

Tot Shabbat

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 10:30 AM (NO TOT SHABBAT IN OCTOBER)

Families with tots come together monthly for a program that includes prayer, challah baking, arts & crafts, music & movement, and storytelling. Tot Shabbat is open to both members and the general public. Please contact Rebecca Weiner for more details; rebecca@shaarzahav.org, 415-861-6932 x302.

East Bay Chavurah

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 6:00-9:00 PM; FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 6:00-9:00 PM

You, your family, and your friend (non-members warmly welcomed) are

B'nei Mitzvah



Maia Ross Trupin will become a bat mitzvah on October 25, with the reading of Bereshit, the first parsha of the Torah cycle. Maia turned thirteen on July 20 and is currently in the seventh grade at Presidio Hill School.

"I am grateful for the support of everyone at Sha'ar Zahav in helping me prepare for this time in my life, but especially to Laura Lowe, my mentor, who has been so generous with her time, her knowledge, and her cats" says Maia.

Maia has been a CSZ member since birth. She was named and attended her first Tot Shabbat services on Danvers

Street. Maia has attended Beit Sefer since first grade. She has been blessed with wonderful teachers and mentors, Sue Bojdak, Kendra Lubalin, Andrea Guerra, Nili Yosha, Ila Cherney, and Rebecca Weiner, among many others.

Maia has co-led services four times, including two "simcha" moments for our community—the erev Shabbat after the California Supreme Court marriage decision, and the debut of the new CSZ siddur.

A committed taekwando student, Maia is working toward her third degree black belt. Her dream is to develop a community based school and homeless shelter. For now, she volunteers at the Martin de Porres soup kitchen, where she helps cook and serve, and enjoys talking with the guests.

Bernal Hill. Anna volunteered at Team Tzadek as part of preparing for her Bat Mitzvah. This included delivering food, celebrating Chanukah with seniors, and gardening at the Jewish cemetery.

Anna is looking forward to her Bat Mitzvah and having her relatives come across the country to celebrate, but it is with some sadness because her grandfather just died. Though she knows he will be there in spirit, her grandparents were going to give her the tallit, always a proud moment for Saba, and each of his grandchildren. As Anna becomes a Bat Mitzvah, she will carry on the traditions her grandfather and her whole family have passed on. She has a strong connection to Israel, just like Saba, and likes to go there and see the Jewish people as one nation. She is looking forward to going to Israel this year with her eighth grade class and praying at the Wall.

Anna is grateful for the love and support that CSZ and all her teachers have provided, including her teachers at Beit Sefer over the past eight years and more recently her mentor Howard Steiermann, drash mentor Andrew Ramer and all the people who have led services with her. Although her years at Beit Sefer have ended, she will still continue to learn and actively participate at Sha'ar Zahav.



Anna Claire Desmond Bernstein, whose Hebrew name is Chana Chava, will be having her Bat Mitzvah on

September 6, 2008. She attends Brandeis Hillel Day School in San Francisco, where she especially likes math and science. Anna also plays soccer and basketball, enjoys time with family and friends, follows the Giants during baseball season and likes to go on walks with her dog Amica at the beach or on

invited to CSZ's East Bay Chavurah. Our evening begins with a vegetarian/vegan potluck. At around 7:30, adults (and teens) are invited to continue our Shabbat experience with some meaningful text-based Jewish dialogue. To RSVP or host a future event, please contact Richard Weiner, 510.531.7660, or Sue Bojdak, 510.530.9955.

BEIT SEFER DATES TO REMEMBER

SEPTEMBER 6

Shabbat Classes Begin
Bat Mitzvah- Anna Bernstein

SEPTEMBER 10

Wednesday Class

SEPTEMBER 13

Shabbat Class

SEPTEMBER 17

Wednesday Class

SEPTEMBER 20

Shabbat Class-Tot Shabbat

SEPTEMBER 24

Wednesday Class-Spiritual Quest

SEPTEMBER 27

Shabbat Class

SEPTEMBER 29

Erev Rosh Hashanah

SEPTEMBER 30

Rosh Hashanah

OCTOBER 1

Rosh Hashanah- No

Wednesday Class

OCTOBER 4

Shabbat Class

OCTOBER 8

Kol Nidre -No Wednesday Class

OCTOBER 9

Yom Kippur

OCTOBER 11

NO SHABBAT CLASS

OCTOBER 15

Wednesday Class—Spiritual Quest

OCTOBER 17

Shabbat Ruach (Friday Night)

OCTOBER 18

Shabbat Class—Sukkot

OCTOBER 20

Celebration 4-6

Simchat Torah

OCTOBER 22

Wednesday Class

OCTOBER 25

Shabbat Class—

Bat Mitzvah

Maia Ross-Trupin

OCTOBER 29

Wednesday Class

NOVEMBER 1

Shabbat Class

NOVEMBER 5

Wednesday Class

NOVEMBER 8

Shabbat Class Celebration of Learning

Sacred Time & Space

NOVEMBER 12

Wednesday Class—Spiritual Quest

NOVEMBER 15

Shabbat Class Begin Unit Two

NOVEMBER 19

Wednesday Class

NOVEMBER 22

Shabbat Class—

Bar Mitzvah—Samuel Ryan

Tot Shabbat

THANKSGIVING BREAK

NO BSPM November 26

AND November 29



Kol Tzedek

(continued from page 1)

We also have been hosting members of sister congregations in New York, Washington, D.C., Minneapolis, Boulder and Seattle who are flying to San Francisco to have their civil ceremony in our sanctuary.

Along with the celebrations, though, comes the reality of Proposition 8 which will be on the November ballot in California. This proposition would amend the California Constitution so that only marriage between a man and a woman would be valid or recognized in California.

The same collaborative spirit that brought a chuppah to City Hall has led

Under the Kol Tzedek banner, Shaar Zahav, Jewish Mosaic, the LGBT Alliance and PJA plan to mobilize the entire Jewish community in California to preserve our right to marry.

to a mobilization to defeat Proposition 8. Under the Kol Tzedek banner, Sha'ar Zahav, Jewish Mosaic, the LGBT Alliance and PJA plan to mobilize the en-

The following is some basic information about these three organizations that are partnering with Sha'ar Zahav; each one is a spoke in the wheel of change for this community organizing effort:

LGBT Alliance of the Jewish Community Federation

CSZ member Lisa Finkelstein is the Director of the LGBT Alliance at the Jewish Community Federation. The Alliance describes itself as "a group of Bay Area LGBT Jews—and our friends and family—who are committed to the principles of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) & *tzedakah* (giving of time, energy, and money to one's community). Its mission statement is as follows:

"Together we are passionately building a visible, vocal, and vibrant LGBT Jewish community." www.sjcf.org/groups/lgbt/

Progressive Jewish Alliance

The Progressive Jewish Alliance (PJA) was founded in 1999 by Jews in Southern California seeking to assert an authentic progressive Jewish presence in the campaigns for social justice. PJA educates, advocates and organizes on issues of peace, equality, diversity and justice, as a progressive voice in

the Jewish community and a Jewish voice in the progressive community. In February 2005, PJA opened a San Francisco Bay Area chapter. Former Executive Director Daniel Sokatch has just begun his tenure as the CEO of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties. www.pjalliance.org

Jewish Mosaic: the National Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity

Founded in 2003 by former Sha'ar Zahav members David Shneer, Caryn Aviv and Gregg Drinkwater, Jewish Mosaic Jewish Mosaic is the first national organization dedicated to helping the Jewish world become more open, accessible, and welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Jews and their families. In addition to its national office in Denver, Colorado, in 2006 Jewish Mosaic opened a Bay area office, and both locally and nationally provides research, training, and professional development to Jewish institutions and professionals, in the service of fostering full LGBT inclusion in Jewish communal life. www.jewishmosaic.org

tire Jewish community in California to preserve our right to marry.

Sha'ar Zahav has decided to organize for this effort through our local San Francisco Organizing Project (SFOP), which has both the infrastructure for advocacy work and links to potential allies across San Francisco. SFOP members will be contacting congregants to collect personal stories, exploring the meaning of marriage to CSZ congregants and the Jewish values therein, doing outreach to other faith-based organizations involved in SFOP, and participating with Kol Tzedek to the field campaign to defeat Proposition 8.

Working together, Kol Tzedek and SFOP have created an action plan which will be executed over the next three months and includes community forums in partnership with the citywide SFOP and with the Jewish Community Relations Council, outreach to rabbis and other clergy in the Bay Area and the Central Valley, and Jewish phone banking events.

Look for the Traveling Rainbow Chuppah, and join Kol Tzedek and SFOP in ensuring the defeat of Prop 8. For more information about how you can get involved, please come to a SFOP meeting (first Thursday of the month), contact CSZ-SFOP member Jonathan Crosby at yyohan@yahoo.com or by phone at 415-255-1858 or contact Greg Lawrence in the synagogue office, greg@shaarzahav.org

What is Ma'ariv?

By Avraham

Ma'ariv—a perfect way to start a new day! While Ma'ariv means Evening (as in Soiree in French), the last prayer of the day before sundown is indeed a marker for "a brand new day" since the Jewish day starts at sunset, rather than sunrise. I always gets a special energy with this evening service, which helps me let go more easily of the tensions of the day coming to an end.

The year after the death of my father Tom (l"z), I was welcomed for daily kaddish during the Ma'ariv service in Conservative and Orthodox shuls. Then, while in New York, I was able to say kaddish every day at Emanuel on Fifth Avenue, the very notable Reform Synagogue.

After I returned to San Francisco, the Sha'ar Zahav ritual committee approved a proposal to hold a daily Ma'ariv. High Holidays 5769 (September 2008) marks the sixth anniversary of what I believe is the only daily Reform Ma'ariv west of Manhattan.

This special time for prayer and Kaddish every Sunday through Thursday evening at 6:30 pm has been sustained by a core group. Initially, the creative eye and design of Alan Foss created a special Ma'ariv Siddur and a select committee put together the essential parts of the service. I specifically remember when a past president of CSZ David Stein recommended the inclusion of a d'var Torah for the parsha of the week. The sound of the shofar was added in the month before Rosh Hashanah, and then the counting of the omer between Pesach and Shavuot. Now, Ma'ariv has become such an important part of our communal lives that it is included in the new Siddur Sha'ar Zahav.

CSZ has been fortunate to have a series of dedicated Ma'ariv service leaders over these past six years. Generally leaders lead Ma'ariv once a week or a couple of times per month. The group

of leaders has included Rabbi Angel, Cantor Bernstein, Rabbi Kukla, Rabbinic Intern Reuben Zellman and lay leaders Mike, Joss, Dana, Jacqui, Kevin, Ilana, Shelli, Bernard, Ron, Alan, Batya, Rachel, George, Andrew, Marty, David, Harold, Christina and moi, Avraham (apologies if I forgot anyone). We are blessed with the inclusion of Ma'ariv as part of the b'nei mitzvah class preparations: once a month a member of the current class is co-leading Ma'ariv. On that day, we hope to also see the remainder of the class in the spirit of student support.

Though the Ma'ariv service is only about 15 minutes long, every evening brings a special feeling depending on the "leader" and sometimes very welcome and unexpected guests. About once a month, someone will show up who has never been to Sha'ar Zahav to say kaddish for the loss or yahrzeit of a loved one. Additionally our own mem-

bers or visitors will sometimes join the Ma'ariv group during a time when they need extra support. We are always so honored when these "guests" show up. It is the our very raison d'être. Please know that we are here when you need support, in times of sadness and joy.

Thank you Sha'ar Zahav for giving us this ongoing holy time and space. Dayenu.

Correction:

Welcoming Committee Co-Chairs are: Jim Acerra and Marty Rawlings-Fein. In addition, thank you to Ellen Murland who has taken on the task of New Member Interview Coordinator.

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Sha'ar Zahav

Elul-Tishrei 5768/69

SEPTEMBER 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 ELUL Labor Day Office Closed 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm HHD Chorus Rehearsal	2 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	3 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	4 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm SFOP meeting	5 ELUL 6:00 pm Friday Night Live 8:15 pm Shabbat Service	6 ELUL 9:00 am Torah Study 9:30 am Beit Sefer first day 10:15 am Shabbat Service & Anna Desmond Bernstein Bat Mitzvah
		7 ELUL 4:00 pm Open House 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	8 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm HHD Chorus Rehearsal	9 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	10 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 6:30 pm Marketing Committee Meeting 7:00 pm Jewish Employment Network Panel	11 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Welcoming Committee Meeting
			12 ELUL 7:30 pm Shabbat Service	13 ELUL 7:30 pm Shabbat Service	14 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm HHD Chorus Rehearsal	15 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Teshuvah with Maimonides Class
			16 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Shalom Bayit Program	17 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 6:30 pm Shalom Bayit Program	18 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 6:45 pm Va'ad Meeting	19 ELUL 7:30 pm Shabbat Service
			20 ELUL 6:30 pm Shabbat Service 10:15 am Shabbat Service 10:30 am Tot Shabbat 8:00 pm Selichot Service	21 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Children's Education Board Meeting	22 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm HHD Chorus Rehearsal	23 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 6:30 pm Children's Education Board Meeting
			24 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 6:30 pm Ritual Committee Meeting	25 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 6:30 pm Ritual Committee Meeting	26 ELUL 7:30 pm Shabbat Service	27 ELUL 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service
			28 ELUL 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	29 ELUL 7:30 pm Erev Rosh Hashanah Service	30 ELUL 9:30 am Rosh Hashanah Services	31 ELUL 29 ELUL 28 ELUL 27 ELUL 26 ELUL 25 ELUL 24 ELUL 23 ELUL 22 ELUL 21 ELUL 20 ELUL 19 ELUL 18 ELUL 17 ELUL 16 ELUL 15 ELUL 14 ELUL 13 ELUL 12 ELUL 11 ELUL 10 ELUL 9 ELUL 8 ELUL 7 ELUL 6 ELUL 5 ELUL 4 ELUL 3 ELUL 2 ELUL 1 ELUL

Bikkur Cholim Fund

Batya Kalis in appreciation of all the caring and support given during her hospitalization.

Chai-Cantor

Daniel Chesir
Karen Schiller

Chai-Siddur

Tikvah Philanthropic Fund in honor of Paul Cohen.
Richard Meyerson

General Fund

Wayne Bender in loving memory of his old friend, Pat Hsu.

Allan Berenstein in memory of Sadie Radetsky.
in memory of Bill Schlichter, Alex Konski, David Kotch and Jay Feinstein.

Ellen Berger in memory of Larry Lehman.

Lucy Bernholz in loving memory of her uncle, Marvin Sinkoff.

Henry Carrey in memory of his Zeyde, Shloyme Postalov.
in memory of his mother, Leyke Post Carrey.

Rick Crane in honor of Cantor Bernstein.
Steve Elman & Tom Holt in memory of Hyman Elman.

in honor of Ron Edelman's graduation from law school.
in honor of Jon Utterlinde's milestone birthday.

Avraham Giannini in honor of Dana Vinicoff, her leadership, and "leyning" the Megillah Book of Ruth at Shavuot.

Meital Golan & Ido Mendes

Marianne Hampton in appreciation of all the great Saturday morning Shabbat services she has attended.

Alex Ingersoll & Martin

Tannenbaum in memory of Edward Ingersoll.
in honor of Marty Fox's Bar Mitzvah.
in memory of Nancy Kates' friend, Kyle Stone.
in memory of Richard Inlander.
in honor of Ron Edelman's graduation from law school.
in honor of Erika Katske's appointment as ED of SFOP.
in honor of Steve Mazer's new job with

the State Bar.

in honor of Sara Haber's 50th birthday.
in honor of Karen Schiller's 50th birthday.
in appreciation of Andrew Ramer and Andrea Guerra's leading an exquisite and moving Freedom Seder.
in honor of Rebecca Weiner's completion of her first and fabulous school year.
in honor of the wedding of Andy Schwartz and John Mark Eggerton.
in honor of the wedding of Tom Lakritz and Chris Wagner.

Batya Kalis in memory of Richard Inlander, Rose Jacobstein and Jerome Kalis.
in appreciation of all the caring and support given during her hospitalization.
in memory of Bill Ashley-Dobbin.

Elizabeth Katz in memory of her father, Joseph Katz.

Ron Lezell in appreciation of Ora Prochovnick.

Jeffrey Lilly**Gerry Llamado & Arthur Slepian**

in honor of the naming of Sabina and Jonathan Brunn.

Mark Mackler in honor of Allan Gold & Alan Ferrera on their marriage.
in honor of Michael Kurokawa & Paul Fishman on their marriage.

James Moser in memory of Benjamin Blutstein.

Harold Podgur in memory of his father, Max Podgur.

Ora Prochovnick & Rena Frantz in honor of Alex Ingersoll's installation as president.

Edward Reynolds & Edwin Jones in honor of Alex Ingersoll becoming president.

Andrew Tallis & David Rosenberg in honor of Paul Cohen, Reuben Zellman, and Bob Guterman, each of whom taking an important part in their wedding ceremony.

Sam Thal in honor of Alex Ingersoll, president.

Samuel & Trotz

Ami Zusman in honor of the birth of Sabina and Jonathan Brunn.
in memory of Richard Inlander.

High Holiday Pledges 5768

Vanessa Eisemann

Erik Henriques

Michael Hulton

Jeff Piade

High Holiday Donation

Gerald Rosenstein

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Sharon & Robert Cohen in memory of Aaron Nacamulli.

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Jonathan Williamson

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John Arnold in honor of Jon Funk's birthday.

Cantor Roslyn Barak in honor of Cantor Bernstein.

James Carlson in honor of Ora Prochovnick and Alex Ingersoll.

Joel & Melody Funk in honor of Jonathan Funk's birthday.

Jonathan Funk in honor of the birth of Benjamin Jacob Whiting-Eisemann.
in honor of his and John Arnold's 24th anniversary.
in honor of Elaine Porter & Ann Ritzma's wedding.
in honor of Paul Fishman & Mike Kurokawa's wedding.
in memory of his father, Rabbi Julius Funk.
in memory of Alan Harap.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Ray Bernstein in honor of Rivkah Freund.

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Elizabeth & Michael Schaffer in memory of Walter Steirman.

Lydia Zinn in memory of Walter Steirman.

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Andrew Schwartz

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Richard Sinkoff

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Jonathan Zimman in honor of Alex
Ingersoll's inauguration as president.

Shelma Angel Green Fund

Rabbi Camille Angel & Karen Segal

Jacqui Shine

Jonathon Thunderword

Social Action Fund

Martin Tilzer in memory of

William L. Bradford.

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★To remember a loved one
★To honor friends and family
★To support the CSZ community
Consider making a donation
Donations can be made in any amount
Contact Shaun at shaun@shaarzahav.org



Naches

Yishar Koach to CSZ Member **Mark Leno** on his recent election to the California State Senate.

Yishar Koach to **Ilana Strubel** on her outstanding work with roofless pets, which was shared with all in a June 15 article in the SF Chronicle.

Yishar Koach to all the dozens of our members who came to SF City Hall Monday and Tuesday, June 16 & 17, to represent our congregation and provide a joyful Jewish presence as same sex marriage became legal in CA.. Special Thanks go to **Erik Henriques, Ora Prochovnick, Lydia Zinn, Daniel Meyer-O'Keefe, and Michael Bettinger** who provided musical accompaniment throughout this joyous time. And an extra special thank you to **Lisa Finkelstein and Rebecca Weiner**, who helped to organize this beautiful endeavor. In addition, we thank our friends at the LGBT Alliance of the Jewish Federation, Jewish Mosaic, the Progressive Jewish Alliance and the Jewish Community Relations Council who collaborated with us to create a visible Jewish presence at this historic occasion.

Yishar Koach to **Jenni Olsen** who

had a fantastic piece published on *Advocate.com* regarding her support of a Trans-inclusive ENDA.

Yishar Koach to CSZ for a successful action as we continue our push towards universal healthcare. To find out more, read "S.F. Expands Health Care Plan After Sha'ar Zahav Push" in June 27's *J* and "Healthy SF Still Working Out Kinks" in July 2's *SF Chronicle* (and be sure to enlarge that beautiful picture of our very own **Scott Kramer**).

Yishar Koach to **Howard Steiermann** who wrote a Torah Queeries entitled "Chant Hallel for Pride!" which was published online by Jewish Mosaic.

Yishar Koach to **Red Bennett**, son of Noam Szoke, who wrote his very own opera, titled *What They Seem*, which was performed at the Mission Cultural Center on August 16 and 17.

Yishar Koach to **Marc Wernick**, who was recently accepted into the prestigious Masters in Public Health program at Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University in the City of New York. While we are sad that Marc will no longer be here with us come this fall, we are overjoyed for this next chapter in his life. Way to go Marc!

Thank You

Thank you to all who made Pride at CSZ a successful and memorable one. Thank you to **Andrew Ramer, Andrea Guerra, Hershey Hirschkop, Florence Nacamulli, and Sara Haber** for their efforts in bringing the Pride Freedom Seder to life. Thank you to **Cantor Sharon Bernstein, Avi Goldberg, Andrew Ramer, Reuben Zellman, The CSZ Chorus (Cassie Angley, Robin Bowen, Henkh-Hersh Carrey, Marci DeLeon, Tony Enriquez, Lou Fischer, Terry Fletcher, F. Fox Frohlich, Rose Katz, Danny Kodmura, Rebecca Kramer, James R. Moser, Sharon Miller, Martin Rawlings-Fein, and Amy Schustack;** and **Nancy Levin**, who, in addition to singing in CSZ's chorus, also provided their melodic piano accompaniment), and the **Naked Voices Trio (Jonathan Funk, Steve Weitz, and Kipp Leyser)** for making this Pride Shabbat a musical extravaganza non-pareil. Thank you to **Martin Rawlings-Fein** for organizing our participation in this year's Pride Parade. And lastly, thank you to all of you who dressed the part, sang the tune, marched with us, and are simply out, proud, and supportive here at CSZ!

We wish to thank the following members for giving their invaluable time and service to CSZ during their tenure on the Va'ad: **Ora Prochovnick** (President), **Drew Parker-Rose** (VP), **Tony Harris** (Treasurer), **Lydia Radovich Zinn** (Recorder), **Joss Eldredge**, **Paula Fleisher**, and **Richard Meyerson**. In addition, we wish to welcome the newest members of our Va'ad: **Laura Lowe** (2nd VP), **James Carlson** (3rd VP), **Merle Malakoff** (Treasurer), **Aaron Danzig**, **Jo Ellen Green Kaiser**, **Michael Tyler**, and **Abi Weissman**. And of course, we thank those of you who remain on the Va'ad and continue to give your time and effort to serve our community: **Alex Ingersoll** (President), **Karen Schiller** (1st VP), **Avi Goldberg** (Recorder), **Manny Fishman**, **Susan Lubeck**, **Shelli Rawlings-Fein**, **Amy Scharf**, and **Craig Shear**.

A huge THANK YOU goes out to **Judy Schwartz** as she steps down from years of doing phenomenally enthusiastic work as the head of CSZ's Membership Committee. And another Thank You to **Marty Rawlings-Fein** and **Jim Acerra** who rose to the occasion and became co-chairs of the

(newly renamed) CSZ Welcoming Committee. In addition, thank you to **Ellen Murland** who has taken on the task of New Member Interview Coordinator.

Thank you to the members of CSZ's Siddur Committee: **Jo Ellen Green Kaiser**, **Michael Tyler**, **Leslie Kane**, and all the other CSZ member who contributed prayers, artwork, ideas, editing and more to bring CSZ's Siddur to life!

Life Cycles

Mazel Tov to **Lucy Bernholz** and **Paula Fleisher**, who got married at City Hall by deputy marriage commissioner-in-chief Mayor Gavin Newsom on June 18.

Mazel Tov to **John Mark Eggerton** and **Andy Schwartz**, who got married on Thursday, June 19.

Mazel Tov to **Jacqui Shine**, and her partner **Britta Olsen**, who were married on Friday, June 20 in two lovely summer sun dresses!

Mazel Tov to **Frank Yellin**, and his partner **Mark Showalter**, who got married on Sunday, June 22.

Mazel Tov to **Vanessa Eisemann** and

Cate Whiting, who were married in LA on Sunday, June 22.

Mazel Tov to **Allan Gold** and **Alan Ferrara**, who were married on June 27 at City Hall, renewing and legalizing their commitment made nine years ago at Sha'ar Zahav.

Mazel Tov to **Lillian Schaechner** and **Elaine Weissman**, who got married on July 11.

Mazel tov to **Nancy Brunn**, who experienced the Hebrew naming of her twin children, **Sabina** (Chaviva bat Chanah) and **Jonathan** (Chayim ben Chanah), on Friday, July 25.

New Members

We warmly welcome the following new members to the Sha'ar Zahav community:

Tod LaRon, **Don Diamond** and his ten-year-old son **Joseph Cavalli**, **Bob Nacamulli** and **Lorraine Locke-Nacamulli**, **Deirdre** and **Lisa Bernard-Pearl**, their five-year-old twins **Joshua** and **Kai**, and their two-year-old daughter **Rachel**, **Becki Tinsley**, **Diana Cooper**.

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June
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Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Douglas Bondick, Diego Finkelstein, Lisa Finkelstein, Ben Lunine and David Teng** In celebration of Martin Harold Fox being called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah from his growing fan club.

Friday Oneg Generously Co-Sponsored by **Andy Schwartz & John Mark Egerton** In honor of their legal wedding on June 19, 2008.

and **CSZ's Past Presidents** In honor of Ora Prochovnick, as she completes her term as CSZ Va'ad President, and Alex Ingersoll, as he is installed as CSZ Va'ad President.

Saturday Kiddush Generously Sponsored by **Martin Fox & Meagan Hessel** In honor of Martin's Bar Mitzvah.

27/28

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **The CSZ Mensch Group**

July
11/12

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Lisa Szer** In memory of her father, Chaim Szer.

25/26

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Amy Schustack & Michael Tyler** In honor of the baby namings of Sabina and Jonathan Brunn.

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Revitalizing Bikkur Cholim

By Daniel Najjar

During the past year, Sha'ar Zahav has taken significant steps to revitalize its Bikkur Cholim Committee. Bikkur Cholim means "Visiting the Sick" in Hebrew, and the Bikkur Cholim committee provides a range of volunteer support services to members who are acutely or chronically ill. The committee makes home and hospital visits, runs errands to grocery stores and drug stores, provides meals, takes members

to and from medical appointments, and through this, provides prayer and hope for sustenance and recovery. About a half-dozen congregants have been assisted during the past 12 months.

In 2007, under the leadership of Alan Foss, the Committee inaugurated a series of trainings for its volunteers, a comfort-themed Friday-night Shabbat service, and a workshop for all CSZ members on Yom Kippur afternoon. In March 2008, the committee introduced monthly get-well card signings on Friday nights (after services in the oneg

room), at which all Shabbat attendees are invited to sign personal get-well cards for CSZ members who are currently on the MiShiberach list.

Persons in need of assistance or interested in volunteering with the committee should contact Greg in the synagogue office at greg@shaarzahav.org. You can also speak with committee members Judith Wolfe, the Rabbi's liaison to the bikkur cholim committee, or me, Daniel Najjar, the committee chair. No experience or training is necessary to volunteer.

Welcoming Community

(continued from page 3)

my personal needs. But I am still learning about ways the congregation can speak to my deepest wishes and needs—I am willing to reach out. For example: I do not have children, even though I love children. About a year ago, with Deborah Levy's encouragement, I became more aware of the bar and bat mitzvah students who co-lead our services as part of their preparatory training. I now try to attend each of the b'nei mitzvah services, whether I know the student or not. And at each service I experience a pride in the children in our community and a pride in our community for fostering the growth of these children. I often tear up a bit at these b'nei mitzvah services. These are our children. These are now my children too.

What about you? Why do you celebrate High Holidays with us each year? Can we fulfill any of those needs throughout the year? How can we partner with you to explore your Jewish identity? Please share your reflections with me at president@shaarzahav.org.

And this should not be a one-time thing. Once a year is not enough. I encourage this conversation throughout the year—with me, with our clergy, with our staff, with our officers, Va'ad members and other leaders. L'Shanah Tovah!

Our Yom Kippur fast lasts 24 hours.



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Yom ha Zikaron: Remembrance and Survival

By Nina Wouk for the Ritual Committee

In the Rocky Mountains, many trees grow on eroding hillsides, exposed roots clutching empty air, some twisting and finding purchase lower down. We are like them: living on a planet that may become uninhabitable for our species; living in a country that no longer produces what it needs, and cannot take care of its people; living in an unstable world economy where the rising powers often value stability above freedom, tolerate queers barely or not at all, and are at best indifferent to the fate of Jews. Which of our roots can hold in these eroding times?

The Torah calls Rosh Hasanah '*zichron truah mikrah kodesh*' - a remembrance, a crying out, a holy assembly. Its liturgy shows us how to cry out, and what to remember. It gives us the Malchuyot, Zichronot, and Shofarot verses, the reminders of God's sovereignty, boundless remembrance, and gifts of redemption.

The Malchuyot/Sovereignty verses invoke God as the source and matrix of nature's often-elusive constancies, and summon us to reconnect with that source. Whether we understand God as Spinoza did, as another name for Nature; or as the Power that makes us able to do good; or as a Personality reaching out to us, it is in this connection that our people have always extended beyond the scope of their own small lives. The verses begin and end with the hope that all the human world will someday recognize God, which is to say, know itself as connected.

The Zichronot/Remembrance verses recount God's remembrance and rescue of our founding generations from in danger; God's compassion, generosity and forgiveness; God's bond with us as both lover and parent. Each verse contains lessons in survival.

From Noah, we learn the precariousness of all life, the need for care and foresight if we are to survive the losses, of cropland, of cheap oil, clean water

and much else that we depend on. From the story of the Exodus, we learn to remember and respect promises made, and to remember freedom even when we have none. From God's remembrance of the land we can learn that, as the heavens are high above the earth, the timeframe of nature is not ours, that its changes are both slower

and swifter than we may imagine.

From God's remembrance of the covenants with Noah and with the ancestors, we can learn to remember our own covenants, the communities which are the source of our strength, the people we know and can rely on.

The Yomim Noraim are dedicated especially to mending relationships

"Being There" in a Time of Grief and Mourning

As the two friends approached the house, one said to the other "I never know what to say or do when somebody's father or mother dies. It's kind of a helpless feeling." "Gee, me either" responded the other,

It's a very familiar scenario. We all recognize it and know the feelings it evokes. Whether this is our first shiva minyan or our hundredth, whether we have experienced the deaths of family members or the tragic losses during the AIDS crisis, the question of how to offer support and comfort to the newly bereaved can arise because each mourner experiences loss differently. We do not know what they will require. What we can know, however, is that our presence is the most important thing we can offer at such a difficult time.

Judaism has provided preparation, rituals and words at the time of death for centuries. They all help, but for bereaved people, however inconsolable they feel, to know that they are not alone is often most precious.

Here at Sha'ar Zahav, perhaps more than at most other synagogues, our members and their loved ones are part of our "chosen family." Like any extended family, we know some people better than others and see some people more frequently than others. We, ourselves, may never have met the person who died, but nonetheless the loss is ours as well.

Mourners may be quite closed in their ability to communicate for awhile and others may want to talk about it. Let the mourner take the initiative. You can be ready to listen, but the mourner decides on when it's time to talk.

Meanwhile, let those closest to the deceased know that you care—"be there" for them. Attend a shiva or sheloshim minyan. Send cards and notes. Offer a hug. You can help provide food for the shiva gatherings, or for those who are mourning a death. You can give tzedakah in memory of the deceased. These are all ways of being there, but your presence itself, in some manner, is the essential ingredient.

There's a lot of literature on Jewish approaches to mourning that you can find either at Sha'ar Zahav and/or at the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center. If you still have questions about mourning, don't hesitate to ask Greg Lawrence (415) 861-6932x303 or greg@shaarzahav.org. If you experience the loss of a loved one, please contact our office immediately. We will be there for you.

Condolences

We announce with sadness the death of:

Olivia Ramirez, godmother of Will Garcia

Kyle Stone, friend of Nancy Kates

Michael Jon Shernoff, friend of Michael Bettinger

Anne Van Buskirk, mother of Jim Van Buskirk

Walter Steirman, father of Howard Steiermann

Ronald Bernstein, father of Ilana Bernstein; father-in-law of Diane Desmond; and grandfather of Desmond Bernstein, Anna Desmond Bernstein, Malik Bernstein, and Chaltu Bernstein.

within our communities, but all days are for the exercise of compassion, generosity and forgiveness among people who need each other. From God's romantic and parental love, which endures even in estrangement, we can learn to resist estrangement, or at least to endure it while hoping for better; to strengthen the bonds of life even after the first passion of love or friendship has burn itself out, to remember that family is forever. '*Al tashlicheinu*', we ask at the beginning of Musaf: do not cast us off as our strength wanes. Neither must we cast each other off in the waning of our world.

The Shofarot/Shofar verses turn us towards the past intimate glory of Mount Sinai, the future hoped-for redemption of the world, and the need to sustain ourselves in our own time by the habits of praise and rejoicing. Our ancestors have survived against all odds through the commandments to bless and to rejoice: to seek, recognize, celebrate and further the good.

All these verses are from the Tanach, and that in itself is a reminder: To survive as a people, especially in eroding times, we need to remain connected to that which outlasts ages. Our Jewish civilization depends on studying, knowing, engaging with and living by the texts which are the center of our heritage.

Time has eroded much from under Jews, often catastrophically; we survive by having deep and wide roots, twined at many levels into the soil of our inheritance. May our cries reach our own ears, and turn us as a holy assembly towards remembrance of those roots.

Member Yahrzeits

September

- 1 John Golebowski
- 3 Lee Gierson
- 5 Bernard Pechter
- 18 Penny Dachinger
- 25 Jeffrey Lewis Cohen

October

- 3 David Pierce
- 6 Jeffrey A. Miller
- 12 Andrew Zysman
- 13 Harry Clint Bigglestone
- 18 Rabbi Benjamin Marcus
- 18 Henry Mautner
- 21 Osna Elsa Frischman
- 24 Glenn Murray Miller
- 29 Michael Mohr
- 29 Duane Kearns Puryear

Please Be in Touch With Me

I am eager to be in touch with all members of the CSZ family whenever there are occasions of joy or sadness in your lives.

Where there is a death in the family, please call me as soon as possible. We very much want to be there with you at a time of grief.

*Rabbi Camille
Shira Angel*

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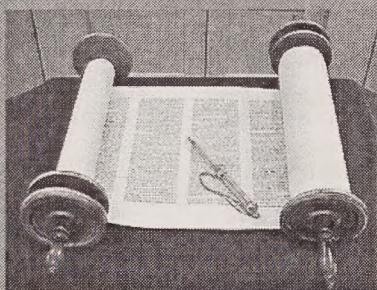
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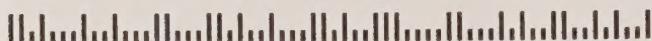


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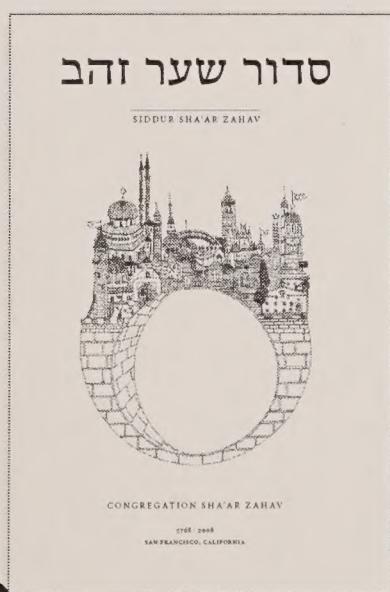
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